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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 KATHMANDU 000298

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS AND DS/IP/NEA  
STATE ALSO PLEASE PASS USAID/DCHA/OFDA  
STATE ALSO PLEASE PASS PEACE CORPS HQ  
USAID FOR ANE/AA GORDON WEST AND JIM BEVER  
MANILA FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA  
LONDON FOR POL/GURNEY  
TREASURY FOR GENERAL COUNSEL/DAUFHAUSER AND DAS JZARATE  
TREASURY ALSO FOR OFAC/RNEWCOMB AND TASK FORCE ON TERRORIST  
FINANCING  
JUSTICE FOR OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL/DLAUFMAN  
NSC FOR MILLARD  
SECDEF FOR OSD/ISA LILLENFELD

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON NEPAL'S MAOIST INSURGENCY, FEBRUARY 7-13,  
2004

REFERENCE: (A) KATHMANDU 0280  
(B) KATHMANDU 0288

SUMMARY

1. A military offensive launched by the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) left nineteen people dead. Fifty-one Maoists reportedly were killed in other clashes with security forces. Reported Maoist attacks on security personnel injured seven and killed one. Two senior Maoist leaders were arrested in Lucknow, India and turned over to Nepalese authorities (Ref A). The Maoist website continues to publicize its plans for a mass meeting in New Delhi on February 15. The World Peoples' Resistance Movement (WPRM), a Maoist-affiliated group based in London, the group announced a conference to be held in London on February 18. Maoists reportedly bombed a passenger bus killing six civilians and injuring thirteen. Indiscriminate bombings, including several in Kathmandu, continue. A Maoist-imposed strike on February 12 shut down the Kathmandu Valley (Ref B) but remained peaceful. The number of surrendered Maoists is nearing three hundred, and the Government of Nepal (GON) announced it would extend the deadline for its amnesty program. The local press reported that Maoists had rounded up over 700 people and forced them to participate in Maoist programs. Maoists reportedly have issued "death warrants" to several members of various political parties, charging them with being government spies. Russia's Ambassador sent a warning to Maoists that "we are watching," and pledged his government's assistance to Nepal. End Summary.

RNA "OPERATION BLITZKRIEG" KILLS 19

2. On February 6, the Royal Nepal Army launched "Operation Blitzkrieg" deep in the jungle of Parsa District, southeast of Kathmandu, leaving nineteen people dead. Seventeen reportedly were Maoists, and two were civilians "caught in the crossfire." On February 9, RNA spokesman Colonel Deepak Gurung said troops launched a military offensive after learning of a planned attack on army bases in that region by Maoists. Gurung praised the operation's success, while the Maoists' official website accused security forces of killing their cadres in "a fake encounter." The rebels alleged that the army murdered their cadres in "a cold-blooded incident" after they had been arrested. Gurung denied the allegations, saying the army has no policy of killing captured Maoists because they can "extract important information from the arrested Maoists, so why would we kill them?"

3. Local human rights organizations were quick to criticize the RNA for the deaths of the two civilians, an eighty-year-old woman and an unidentified male, and questioned the RNA's claim that there was an encounter. RNA spokesman Colonel Deepak Gurung acknowledged that the woman might have been killed in crossfire, but added "we don't know whose bullet killed her." Gurung also said security forces repeatedly asked the rebels to surrender, and opened fire only after an area commander began firing at them.

4. Fifty-one Maoists reportedly were killed in other clashes with security forces. On February 12, six Maoists were killed in the neighboring districts of Parsa and Bara, and one in Salyan District. Five rebels were killed in Bara District in two separate clashes on February 9 and 11, and two each in Rautahat District on February 9. Two more were killed in Dhanusha District on February 11. The insurgents suffered heavy casualties on February 8 with seventeen killed; twelve in the eastern districts of Ramechhap, Saptari, Udayapur, Panchthar, and Parsa; two in the western district of Jumla; and three in the central districts of

Kaski and Parbat.

15. Reported Maoist attacks on security personnel injured seven and killed one. On February 9, an ambush by Maoists left a head constable of police killed and an RNA soldier seriously injured in Lalitpur District, neighboring Kathmandu. On February 8, in Nuwakot District, just north of Kathmandu, six Armed Police Force (APF) personnel were injured by a Maoist-planted landmine.

#### INDIA ARRESTS TWO SENIOR MAOISTS

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16. On February 8, nearly a week after the governments of India and Nepal publicly announced their commitment to fight cross-border terrorism, Matrika Prasad Yadav and Suresh Ale Magar, two senior Maoist leaders, were arrested in Lucknow, India. The two men were arrested following a tip by India's intelligence agency, and later turned over to security forces in Nepal. Maoist supremo Prachanda, in a scathing press statement released on February 10, accused the Indian government of taking the men in "a kidnapping style," and said his party was "stunned and furious." He has demanded their release.

17. The Maoist website continues to publicize its plans for a mass meeting in New Delhi on February 15. The meeting is only one of many activities planned to commemorate the start of the so-called "Peoples' War" eight years ago, and the website urges people to unite against the "attempt of American imperialism to infiltrate South Asia through Nepal." The statement also accuses America of opting for "dictatorship and not democracy."

18. On February 7, a vernacular newspaper reported that according to a recently surrendered insurgent, many of the rebels injured during clashes with security forces receive medical treatment in Jalandhar, Punjab, India--the same Indian state where one of Maoist supremo Prachanda's daughter reportedly lives.

#### MAOIST CONFERENCE PLANNED IN BRITAIN

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19. In an email distributed by the World Peoples' Resistance Movement (WPRM), a Maoist-affiliated group based in London, the group announced a conference to be held in London on February 18 in support of overthrowing the monarchy. The email criticizes the "imperialists led by the US" for "stepping up global intervention, aggression and occupation," and urges support for Maoists to seize power. The planned conference includes videos of mass rallies in Kathmandu, speeches, and distribution of Maoist literature.

#### BOMB BLAST KILLS CIVILIANS; KATHMANDU ALSO HIT

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110. On February 12, Maoists reportedly bombed a passenger bus, killing six civilians and injuring thirteen. Four security personnel also were injured. According to the local press, the rebels may have targeted the bus because security personnel were traveling on it, or in violation of the strike (bandh) called on that day. A similar attack on a minibus on February 11 in Kavre District, bordering Kathmandu on the east, injured three civilians and two RNA soldiers. Maoists reportedly blocked the road and threw a socket bomb at the minibus as it approached.

111. On February 11, Maoists set fire to the press building of Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu. Maoists also set fire to the same building last year. Two bombs exploded in the Kathmandu Valley within twenty-four hours. On February 9 Maoists detonated a bomb in a ward office in Kathmandu District, and on February 10 a bomb was detonated in the early morning in a busy shopping area in the Kathmandu Valley. No casualties were reported, but a statue of the late King Mahendra was damaged. Security reportedly has been increased in Kathmandu Valley in preparation for the possibility of increased violence during the anniversary of the start of the so-called "Peoples' War."

112. On February 11, Maoists in the western district of Jhapa pulled off a brazen robbery while Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa spoke in a nearby government building. The rebels stole USD 4,000 from the Nepal Telecommunication Office despite the heavy presence of security for the Prime Minister's speaking engagement.

#### MAOIST STRIKE SHUTS DOWN CAPITAL

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113. A Maoist-called nationwide strike (bandh) on February 12 brought Kathmandu Valley to a standstill (Ref B) but remained peaceful. Businesses and schools were closed, and transportation services also halted. Another strike has

been called for February 17 and also for February 25-29.

#### MAOIST SURRENDERS NEARING THREE HUNDRED

14. On February 6, Home Ministry Spokesman Gopendra Bahadur Pandey said that over 250 Maoists had surrendered since the announcement of the Government of Nepal's (GON) amnesty program. He praised its success and said the government's actions are receiving "wide public support." Several recently surrendered Maoists addressed reporters on February 6, declaring "political disagreement" with their former comrades, and urging others to abandon the "irresponsible and inhumane" activities of the Maoists. The amnesty program, originally due to end on February 14, has now been extended to April 12.

#### HUNDREDS ROUNDED UP FOR MAOIST PROGRAMS

15. On February 11, the local press reported that Maoists had rounded up over 700 people from the far-western district of Accham, and forced them to participate in events commemorating the start of the "Peoples' War." Women, children and elderly were among those forcibly marched to the site of the programs.

#### PARTY CADRES ISSUED MAOIST DEATH WARRANTS

16. The local press reported that Maoists have issued "death warrants" to several members of various political parties. On February 12, three teachers and four activists of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), the Rastriya Prajantra Party (RPP), and the Nepali Congress (Democratic) had death warrants issued against them after the insurgents accused them of being government spies. On February 7, similar warrants were issued by Maoists against three district leaders of the CPN-UML in Shyangja District. (Note: On February 11, Maoist committee members of Dhanusha District issued a press statement claiming responsibility for the February 2 murder of Hem Narayan Yadav, a former member of parliament and the CPN-UML. The insurgents said Yadav was killed for spying. End note).

#### RUSSIA OFFERS ASSISTANCE

17. On February 9, Russian Ambassador Valery V. Nazarov said his government was aware of the terrorist threat in Nepal and "we are watching." Speaking at a press briefing, the envoy said Russia "resolutely denounces" extremist violence and noted that the Maoists not only conduct military attacks on security forces, but also on civilians. Despite offering support to the GON, Nazarov said the current crisis was an "internal affair," and would not elaborate on what kind of support his government would provide.

MALINOWSKI